

**Resolution and Action on Agenda Items
Idaho Fish and Game Commission Meeting
July 10-11, 2003
Kootenai River Inn, Bonners Ferry, ID**

Commissioners Hadley, Irby, Watts, Wood, Gibbs, Wheeler, Burns, attending.

Items in these notes may be in different order than the agenda.

1. **Opening comments**, Chairman Irby , introduction of new commissioner Cameron Wheeler.
 2. **Agenda changes**, elect vice-chair
Action: Wood nominates Hadley, Gibbs seconds, Hadley is unanimously elected vice-chair for the year 2003. Unanimous.
 3. **Appointment of Southwest Region Winter feeding committee members** to represent Garden Valley.
Action: Commissioner Watts moves, Wood seconds, to appoint Dino Hugon of Garden Valley and Chris Korell of Emmett to the Southwest Region Winter feeding committee. Unanimous.
 4. **Review of public comment.**
 5. **Director's report**, Steve Huffaker. Chip Corsi will be the new Panhandle Region supervisor; Al Nicholson has delivered his letter stating intent to retire, so the selection process will begin for a new enforcement chief.
 6. **Commission Reports**. Gibbs reports southeast fisheries are suffering due to drought, fires causing a loss of winter range in some areas. Hadley reports Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative, late snow helped. Wood reports wettest April in years, really good sage grouse and chukar crops. Watts reports some concern about agricultural water in the event Cascade is drained. Sage grouse committee continues to meet to work on problems, especially in Owyhee County. Good crop of sage grouse in the area. Suggests that at some point the commission take a serious look at the Owyhee Initiative wilderness being formulated for Owyhee County. Burns reports on creek blow-outs in the Salmon River areas where big fires burned a few years ago. Lots of damage to trails and roads, and watersheds. Wheeler reports that he has worked some with DEQ and learned that there is a difference in the way that the state and the Forest Service interpret the data. Irby reports that due to the late winter, elk stayed higher on the hill and came through in better shape, with better calf survival. Collaborative elk group put together by Sen. Crapo will have its fifth meeting tomorrow. Thank you Jim Hagedorn for volunteering to auctioneer the fur auction, where \$12,000 was earned.
 7. **Consent calendar**, minutes of April 23-24, May 12, June 10 and June 23, 2003 meetings.
Action: Gibbs moves, Hadley seconds to approve the minutes. Unanimous.
- 7a. **Financial report, Steve Barton**. May 30 fiscal report distributed. In the past month FG has gone from being \$1.9 million in income beyond projections to being \$1.1 million below. Nonresident tag sales have declined with a real slowdown when war was declared in Iraq. Since 1996, sales have continued through the summer, where previously they were strong early and then essentially stopped. Sale of cutthroat license plates exceed that of any other plates, selling 300-345 new plates per month since

January. Nonprofit group that bought the Marsing property is not able to make payments, foreclosure is an option we may have to consider.

7b. **Budget adjustments**

1. Increase the FY04 NRPB budget by \$225,000 to do subbasin assessment in the Upper Snake River province on contract with Northwest Power Planning Council. Funds are 100 percent Bonneville Power.
2. Increase the FY04 NRPB budget by \$175,000 to do subbasin assessment in the Boise-Payette-mid-Snake subbasins on contract with Northwest Power Planning Council. Funds are 100 percent Bonneville Power.
3. Increase the FY04 NRPB budget by \$80,616 to do subbasin assessment in the Salmon subbasin on contract with Northwest Power Planning Council. Funds are 100 percent Bonneville Power.
4. Increase the Wildlife Bureau FY04 budget by \$119,500 to bring budget in line with contract to reduce sediment and nutrient loads in the Portneuf River through the combined efforts of wetland restoration and implementation of a settling pond and return to the stream at the Edson Fichter Nature Area. EPA funds grant from the Idaho Dept. of Environmental Quality.
5. The communication Bureau requests an increase of \$35,000 in the FY04 budget for the ongoing effort to restore native riparian habitats along the Little Salmon River and its tributaries. The Department has been working cooperatively with landowners, the NRCS, the USFWS, local schools, volunteers and reservists since 1996 planting shrubs and trees. Volunteers and reservists have comprised the workforce to plant shrubs and trees along the river where it flows through the meadows north of New Meadows. The NOAA Community Based Restoration Program Grant will fund plant material and equipment needed to continue work on the project.

Action: Moved by Wood, second by Gibbs to approve all. Unanimous.

8. **Proposal to authorize the release of one (1) 2004 Idaho Special Bighorn Sheep Permit/Tag** to be sold by auction by the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep at its national convention in Reno NV, January 14-17, 2004; and to authorize the release of one (1) 2004 Idaho Special Bighorn Sheep Permit/Tag to be sold by lottery in July 2004 by the Idaho Chapter, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep. Since releasing the first auction tag in 1988, the department has received \$809,950 for bighorn research and transplants. The lottery tag, first released in 1992, has earned \$312,931.

Action: moved by Burns, second by Wood to approve. Unanimous.

9. **Handicapped Vehicle Shooting Permit and Handicapped Archery Permit**
IDFG has always required a physician's signature on an application to receive a Handicapped Vehicle Shooting Permit and a Handicapped Archery Permit. More and more physician assistants and nurse practitioners are signing these kinds of forms. Customers have commented on how difficult it is getting to be seen by the physician, especially in the Veterans medical centers. The department proposes a rule change to accept the signature of physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

Action: moved by Hadley moves, Burns seconds to approve. Gibbs reports an increase in applications in his region since vehicle restrictions have been placed on hunting. There is discussion about whether the restrictions on handicapped permits should be tightened. The proposal passes with commissioner Wood voting against it.

10. **Animal Damage Control Priorities, Jim Unsworth.** FG gives \$50,000 to Animal Damage (Wildlife Services) and since 1997 has directed the other

- legislatively mandated \$50,000 to coyote control in the Southeast Region mule deer study. Staff wants direction to continue the coyote control. Commission gives that direction.
11. **Presentation to Ralph Anglen, Ned Horner**, Regional Fisheries Manager. Ralph 90-year old Anglen wrote a fishing column, "Anglin' With Anglen" for the Bonners Ferry Herald for over 35 years. Horner has known Anglen for 20 years. A plaque is presented "in appreciation for 35 years of promoting sport fishing in north Idaho." Anglin said "Ned was always a pretty good friend of mine but I didn't often agree with him."
 12. **Hunter Education Awards, David M. Nelson**, Hunter Education Coordinator presents 35,000-point awards to Ed Nordgaarden of Sandpoint, David E. Owsley (absent) of Orofino and F. Eugene Smith of Post Falls.
 13. **Presentation by the domestic cervid industry, Gary Queen, Secretary-treasurer of Idaho Elk Breeders' Association** in response to Director Huffaker's report on canned hunts at the April meeting. Formed in 1997 to promote and protect the elk industry as a viable agricultural pursuit in Idaho. Says elk and deer farming for agriculture and sport has been around since the time of the pharaohs. Distributed an information package showing elk lower in fat, saturated fat, calories and cholesterol than skinless chicken, beef round or pork loin; says elk velvet will alleviate the symptoms of arthritis and help memory. Supports sale of domestic elk to "harvest preserves" which follow a code of ethics developed by the North American Elk Breeders Association. Request that the Commission give elk ranches the same respect given to other livestock operations under Idaho law.
 14. **Grizzly Bear Management, Wayne Wakkinen, Sr. Wildlife Research Biologist**. Since 1983, 59 grizzlies have been collared in the Selkirk recovery area. The population is estimated to have increased at a rate of two percent per year. The area is 2,000 square miles and to reach recovery there would need to be an estimated 100 bears, and we probably have 60-70 now. As the population increases there will be more bears near the border of the recovery zone and even outside the boundary and we will have to learn to deal with them. Huffaker reports that the North Continental Divide Ecosystem is planning to do a population estimate, which would be a first step to delisting. Huffaker hopes to see Yellowstone Grizzlies delisted in the next two years.
 15. **Landowner Appreciation Program Review and Access Yes! Funding options, Brad Compton**. Compton has a report on leases and acreages by region.

Background:

Landowner Appreciation Program - The Landowner Appreciation Program (LAP) was established in 1992 to recognize private landowners that provide significant big game habitat values. The program involves a separate controlled hunt drawing process for qualifying landowners. Two significant changes have occurred to the program since inception and include: 1) landowners may designate their tag(s), and 2) providing reasonable access is no longer a requirement. Over 500 landowners are involved in the program, yet the controlled hunt drawing process is under subscribed.

Access Yes - Access Yes is a voluntary program developed under the leadership of the Fish and Game Advisory Committee. A major responsibility of the committee is to develop programs that increase cooperative relationships between landowners and sportsmen. The committee has worked for over three years developing a program aimed at increasing the value of wildlife to private landowners as well as benefiting sportsmen through increased access on or across private land. In April 2003, the Idaho Fish &

Game Commission authorized one-time startup money to implement Access Yes. Based on preliminary information, the program was on pace to enroll at least 50,000 acres of private land and provide access across private land to an additional 200,000 acres of public land in 2003. Funding for future years needs to be identified. Goal is to get access to 1,000,000. There are currently 30 signed up that will provide access to 107,000 acres of private land and over 200,000 acres of public land. Cost this year overall is \$0.33 cents per acre. All huntable species are included. Private land cost is \$1.09 per acre.

Policy issues:

Landowner Appreciation Program – The Idaho Fish & Game Commission has authority to establish the permit levels for LAP hunts, while the Director has authority to establish which hunts are eligible. With the exception of 1 antlered bull hunt in the Owyhees where an additional 25% of permits are authorized, the Commission has authorized LAP permit levels at an additional 10% of existing controlled hunts. LAP controlled hunts are offered where no general season opportunity is available.

Access Yes - Idaho sportsmen have generally relied on landowners to voluntarily allow free access to or across their property for hunting and fishing. In many areas of the State, access to private land is very limited and landowners have little incentive to allow sportsmen the use of their property for hunting and fishing. Wildlife on private land is more valuable to landowners if they are able to realize even a small amount of income from maintaining or developing wildlife habitat. Several states have developed successful and popular programs that pay landowners for allowing sportsmen access to their property.

Public Involvement Process:

Landowner Appreciation Program – The general sporting public has little involvement in LAP. However, a segment of Idaho sportsmen “resent” special opportunities, including LAP, that exclude the general hunting public. There are 543 landowners currently registered in the LAP program, 35 % have less than 1,000 acres. Overall they make up 11% of the farm acreage in Idaho. The median size of the average Idaho farm is 150 acres, of the LAP registrant, 1,320. Thirty six percent are eligible for one species tag, 37 percent for two. Deer and elk antlerless hunts are undersubscribed; some of the antlered hunts are oversubscribed. Antelope hunts are about evenly subscribed.

Access Yes - The public has indicated that access for hunting on private land in Idaho is not adequate. Sportsmen also agree that a program that compensates private landowners who allow sportsmen access for hunting and fishing is a good idea for Idaho.

Justification:

Landowner Appreciation Program – The Commission has requested background information about LAP.

Access Yes - Increased access to private land for hunting and fishing will increase recreational opportunities for Idaho sportsmen and improve relationships between sportsmen and landowners.

Action Requested:

Landowner Appreciation Program - None, the agenda item is for informational purposes only.

Access Yes - Proceed with permanent implementation of Access Yes and provide direction to staff for permanent funding sources.

Staff Recommendations:

Landowner Appreciation Program – None, for informational purposes only.

Recess for lunch, 12:15. Reconvene

16. **Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative, Patty Perry, Tribal Administrator, Kootenai Tribe.** The Kootenai Tribe, city of Bonners Ferry and Boundary County are working together to address resource issues in the lower Kootenai subbasin. They are hoping to develop a joint Total Maximum Daily Load plan for the Kootenai basin (sediment loading in streams), a wetland/riparian conservation strategy, burbot recovery outside of listing, involvement in the Corps of Engineers EIS to operate Libby Dam and other issues as they become timely. Very complimentary of Commissioner Hadley and regional Fish and Game staff for their involvement and support.

Adjourn 2:00 p.m. and prepare to depart for Boundary Creek WMA tour and BBQ. Chairman Irby has to leave to tend business matters so hands the Gavel to vice chair Hadley.

Reconvene July 11, 8:00 a.m. with all commissioners present except Irby.

17. **Experience with elk farms, Brad Compton and Jim Hayden.**

Background:

Domestic cervidae farming is a growing industry in Idaho. There are currently 93 game farms in Idaho, mostly elk. Four new shooter bull operations coming on line this year, the largest being Siddoway's. The Idaho Department of Agriculture (ISDA) administers rules and regulations pertaining to domestic cervidae including responsibility for escaped domestic cervids (estrays). Current rules and statutes require that the owner/operator are responsible for retrieving estrays. If an owner/operator fails or refuses to retrieve the escaped animal(s), the sheriff or brand inspector "shall" seize the animal(s). Both ISDA and the Department of Fish & Game (IDFG) prohibit the entrapment of wildlife, but IDFG has yet to issue a citation in cases involving domestic cervidae farms. IDFG has been and could become more involved with domestic cervidae estrays and/or entrapment of wildlife to minimize the potential for transmission of disease or genetic exchange between domestic and wild cervids. Additionally, IDFG may be requested to assist in some cases due to the limited ability of ISDA, sheriffs and domestic cervidae owner/operators to either capture estrays or remove entrapped wildlife. Responding to estrays or entrapment of wildlife could result in significant personnel and operating costs to IDFG.

Mr. Gary Queen of Rose Lake Elk Ranch, Kootenai, was observed rounding up escaped elk in late April. IDFG staff offered help and the offer was accepted. In late May he captured an escaped bull, as well as a wild bull. The wild bull was "lethally removed" by IDFG. Since the operation has been closed to import of elk from outside the state for 4 ½ years and testing done for CWD and other diseases with negative results the risk was judged minimal and further search was called off in the steep, forested terrain. Three domestic bulls remain in the wild.

Policy issues:

ISDA administers all rules, regulations and policies regarding captive cervidae farms. Because of this authority, the Idaho Fish & Game Commission has not established rules or policies relative to captive cervidae.

Public Involvement Process:

None.

Justification:

The Commission has requested background information on IDFG actions taken as a result of domestic cervidae escapes and entrapment of wildlife.

Action Requested:

Although this agenda item does not require action, Department staff seeks clarification for Department involvement with estrays and/or entrapment of wildlife as they relate to captive

cervidae farming. Staff will provide detailed background information on 2 cases where Department action was taken to minimize potential for disease or genetic exchange or was requested on behalf of the domestic cervid owner. Specifically, all actions and costs associated with the Rose Lake domestic elk escape (Unit 4) and Green Canyon wild moose/mule deer entrapment (Unit 64) will be provided.

Staff Recommendations:

Discuss and provide clarification for Department involvement with estrays and wildlife entrapment associated with captive cervidae farms.

Discussion

Hayden explains the commission policy that all elk must be eradicated in an area within five miles in every direction from the site of a confirmed case of CWD. Discussion follows on whose responsibility it would be to round up escaped livestock, answer being the state brand inspector, county sheriff, or on USFS land, the Forest Service which could auction the animals for trespass fees. The owner is liable for recovery costs. Civil value of lethally removed wildlife and cost to IDFG to separate wild and domestic animals. In the case of Green Canyon Ranch in Madison County in 2002 the value of removed wildlife was \$6,200 and the estimated IDFG cost was \$9,000. Huffaker establishes that domestic elk are not big game (only wild animals are game) they are domestic livestock and FG cannot regulate them, but might have some authority to stop the shooting of wild animals which happen to get inside a domestic cervid enclosure.

Action: Watts moved moves to adopt a rule that “No person shall take big game animals within a fenced enclosure designed to prohibit egress or ingress of big game animals, including facilities classified as domestic cervidae farms under Idaho Statute 25-3501. Motion dies for lack of a second.

Staff will take the proposed rule out for public comment.

18. Economics of Hunting, Fishing, Watching Wildlife, Virgil Moore, Jim Unsworth.

Background:

Informational Update: The Department is currently conducting a statewide fisheries economic survey to update information that is between 10 and 20 years old. Economic information for Chinook salmon and statewide fisheries are current but site-specific economic information for resident fish and steelhead are dated. The survey (attached) is being mailed to license holders on a quarterly basis. The first quarter surveys have been completed and the second quarter survey was mailed June 25, 2003. Quarterly surveys reduce angler memory bias providing more accurate estimates. When completed, economic information for fishing will be valid for most counties and individual lakes, reservoirs and streams, with sufficient responses for statistical validity. We will review the current economic survey information for other species and activities and entertain any discussion with Commission on additional fish and wildlife economic information expectations.

Fish and Wildlife economic values are now being used in community development planning, such as the Kootenai Initiative discussed yesterday. These values played a major part in legislative decisions to withdraw Henrys Fork and the South Fork of the Payette from hydropower development. Virgil discusses the amount spent by anglers in Idaho, which averages \$100 per day. Chinook anglers and steelhead anglers together generate about \$180 million per year.

Unsworth presents information on the economic value of deer and elk hunting, \$340 million in 1999.

19. Lands committee progress report, Gregg Servheen.

Background:

Lands committee represents all regions through the regional habitat managers, and is chaired by the Deputy Director. The Department and Commission recently adopted new policies related to land acquisition. These policies were formulated, among other issues, to address concerns of elected officials about the Department's procedures and priorities related to land acquisition and to provide a more strategic, integrated, and objective process related to land acquisition projects within the Department.

This agenda item is an update on the status of implementing the Department's new acquisition policy and procedures. The following tasks have been addressed during the past 6 months and will be explained in a presentation to the Commission:

- ✓ Final Department Policy revisions
- ✓ Construct a funding syllabus
- ✓ Develop ranking criteria for future acquisitions
- ✓ Acquisition Form (BA23) revision including new ranking criteria
- ✓ Differences between old and new processes

Policy issues:

Land acquisition process

Public Involvement Process:

Commission adopted a policy on land acquisition at their January 2003 meeting.

Justification:

Idaho Code 36-104 authorizes the Idaho Fish and Game Commission to acquire lands or water for the restoration, propagation and protection of fish and wildlife; to provide public hunting, fishing and trapping areas; and for other specific uses. Idaho Code also dedicates a portion of selected license fees for land acquisition and outlines specific procedures the Commission must follow in acquiring land and waters for these purposes.

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission recognizes acquisition and management of lands providing important habitat for fish, wildlife and associated recreation as an appropriate strategy to protect, preserve and perpetuate these resources for public use and enjoyment as well as for their ecological value. The Commission also recognizes that there are financial and other limitations on the amount of land the Department can own or manage. The Commission therefore directs the Department to focus on lands with high fish, wildlife and associated recreational value where Department ownership or management provides exceptional benefits.

Action Requested:

None

Staff Recommendations:

Continue with implementing the Department's Land Acquisition for Sustainable Fish and Wildlife Habitats and Recreation Policy as described.

20A. Chester Wetlands update, Greg Servheen

Background:

- In 2001, the Idaho Fish and Game Commission (Commission) identified the Chester Wetlands (aka Olmstead Ranch) as a priority wildlife habitat and public access property.
- The Commission has determined that it is not practicable to obtain conservation easements to accomplish the goals of the Chester Wetlands acquisition, in as much as the prior owners of the ranch (Olmsteads) were not interested in conveying anything other than fee title.
- The Commission previously approved the general terms of a proposal by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Olson Land Exchange for acquisition of the Olmstead Ranch in Freemont County via a series of exchange related transactions (Commission meetings on 1/19/01, 5/17/01, 4/25/02, and 10/03/02).
- TNC bought Chester Wetlands as a conservation buyer for IDFG.

- The appraised value of the Olmstead Ranch is \$3,206,727.
- The IDFG parcels approved by the Commission for disposal to generate the funds to acquire Chester Wetlands from the TNC were as follows:
 1. Tappan Parcel (Lemhi County)– approximate value \$1.3 million
 2. South Fork Properties (Valley County) – approximate value \$1.3 million
 3. Grangeville 80 (Idaho County) – approximate value \$300,000

In 2002, the Tappan parcel was exchanged to the USFS and with \$350,000 from the Land Acquisition and Development Account (HB530), the Department acquired 49% undivided interest in the Chester Wetlands property. An additional \$1.449M is needed to purchase the remaining 51% of the property from TNC.

- The Department is now pursuing the following to complete acquisition of the Chester wetlands property.
 - The IDFG South Fork parcels are exchanged to the USFS; the USFS exchanges their Brown's Meadow parcel to the University of Idaho; the University of Idaho provides approximately \$1.02 million cash towards IDFG purchase of Chester Wetlands through Olson Land Exchange.
 - The USFS is unable to provide \$250,00 in cash to equalize values of the exchange as they had originally planned. Therefore, the exchange will result in only 450 acres of the total 785 acres of the IDFG South Fork properties going to the USFS. This results in a shortfall of \$250,000.
 - The Grangeville property has an appraised value of \$278,000. However, the property has not sold and this leaves another shortfall of approximately \$300,000 to complete the Chester Wetlands exchange.
 - Therefore the Department will be short approximately \$550,000 in cash to complete the entire Chester Wetlands purchase.
 - TNC loans come due August 1, 2003 and they have to refinance by then. Any accrued interest on the note(s) will be paid by IDFG as per agreement with TNC.
 - The current cash balance in HB530 is approximately \$550,000 and could be used to cover the shortfall.
 - Proceeds from the sale of Grangeville 80 could be directed back into HB530.

Policy issues:

The Department proposes to temporarily exhaust the Land Acquisition and Development Account to complete the acquisition of the Chester Wetlands and partially reimburse the Account with the proceeds from auctioning the Grangeville 80.

Public Involvement Process:

The Commission notified the Fremont County Commissioners of the proposed acquisition on 6/27/01 and the Department held public hearings at the Commissioners request, pursuant to Idaho Code 36-104(7). The Department addressed the issues raised at the public hearings held on July 31, 2001. Fremont County Commissioners are still very supportive the acquisition of the Chester Wetlands by IDFG as per contact on October 17, 2002.

The Senate Resource and Environment Committee and House Resource and Conservation Committee were notified of the exchange as of 6/29/01.

Justification:

The TNC loans come due on August 1, 2003. In order to avoid refinancing and additional interest charges the Department recommends acquiring the remaining 51% of the Chester Wetlands using the \$550,000 in the Land Acquisition and Development Account. The Grangeville 80 has been offered for sale for some time and we have not been able to close a deal. The Department recommends that the parcel be offered for sale at public auction,

through the Idaho Department of Lands. A minimum bid will be required. The Lands Committee has reviewed and approved this proposal.

Action Requested:

The Commission's resolution authorizing the Director of the Department, as Secretary of the Commission, to provide an estimated \$550,000 in funding from the Land Acquisition and Development (HB530) account to complete the acquisition of the Chester Wetlands property and to offer the Grangeville property for sale at auction with the proceeds to be delivered to the Land Acquisition and Development account.

Staff Recommendations:

The Lands Committee recommends the use of HB530 monies in the Land Acquisition and Development account to complete the Chester Wetlands acquisition, make TNC whole, and complete this exchange. They also recommend the auction of the Grangeville property with proceeds to reimburse the HB530 account.

Staff Recommendations:

The Lands Committee recommends the use of HB530 monies in the Land Acquisition and Development account to complete the Chester Wetlands acquisition, make TNC whole, and complete this exchange. They also recommend the auction of the Grangeville property with proceeds to reimburse the HB530 account.

Action: Gibbs moves, Wood seconds to accept staff recommendation. Unanimous.

20B. Farber and Granite property donations, Mary Terra-Burns

Background:

Farber

The Farber property is approximately 15 acres in size and adjoins the Thompson Marsh Parcel of the Coeur d'Alene River WMA. The lower third of the property is marsh and is separated from the uplands by the Thompson Lake County Road. The uplands are composed of a hayfield and a small amount of timbered ground.

Granite Creek

In March 2001 Avista donated 157 lots totaling approximately 60 acres in the Granite Creek subdivision to the Department for conservation purposes. At the time of the property transfer, 17 lots remained in private ownership within the donated parcel. Avista has subsequently acquired 8 of the 17 private inholdings and desires to donate them to IDFG. Acquisition of these inholdings would benefit fish and wildlife by securing at-risk lands, and reduce the potential for land management conflicts with existing inholding landowners.

Both parcels were reviewed by the Lands Committee and recommended for acquisition by donation.

Policy issues: Land acquisition (donation).

Public Involvement Process:

County Commissioners were notified on May 27, 2003 (Granite Creek-Bonner County) and June 3, 2003 (Farber-Kootenai County) and there were no objections and there was no opposition to the donation.

Justification:

Farber

If acquired by the Department, the lowland portion could be enhanced to promote waterfowl production and the uplands could be enhanced for big game. Accomplishing these enhancements would be relatively easy given the Coeur d'Alene River WMA headquarters is located approximately three miles away and staff and equipment required to complete the improvements are already on site. Monetary needs associated with the improvements could be met with existing budgets. Long-term operational expenses would be negligible.

Granite Creek

This acquisition is partial mitigation for the negative impacts to native fish species associated with the construction and operation of Cabinet Gorge and Noxon Rapids Dams owned by Avista Corporation. The parcels proposed for acquisition are inholdings within the existing Department ownership on Granite Creek. The Granite Creek property is the site of the Granite Creek kokanee egg taking station and is also a bull trout spawning tributary to Lake Pend Oreille. Long-term operational expenses will be negligible and covered under existing agreements with Avista.

Action Requested:

Commission Approval

Staff Recommendations: Staff recommends acceptance of the donations.

Action: Wood moves, Wheeler seconds to accept. Unanimous.

21. Wolf Policy, Steve Nadeau.

Background: There are 14 breeding pairs of wolves in Idaho, possibly as many as 41 packs.

Idaho Code 36-715 was implemented in 1988 by the Idaho Legislature to restrict the Department of Fish and Game's involvement in wolf recovery. The legislation was amended in 2000 to allow more involvement by IDFG. The legislature in cooperation with the governor's office passed a joint resolution in 2002 accepting the Idaho Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. The plan calls for IDFG to be the primary manager of wolves once they are delisted. This past spring the legislature, Governor Kempthorne, and Director Huffaker negotiated and passed HB294 that allows the state to become re-involved in wolf management prior to delisting. The current Fish and Game Commission endorsed wolf policy is not consistent with the current law.

Policy issues:

The Commission policy must be updated to address the new law, legislative and gubernatorial intent, while addressing the concerns and mandates of the Department. The current policy does not allow the Department to implement the current law.

Public Involvement Process:

There is strong support from the legislature, the agricultural community, local leaders, sportsmen groups, and individuals to de-list wolves and initiate state management. The common theme in letters to the wildlife bureau entails the concern for wolf predation in many areas of the state impacting hunting opportunity. There is a concern for urgency due to wolf population expansion. The public would need to be included in developing the rules related to wolf management post de-listing.

Justification:

The Staff believe that in order to fulfill the requirements of the Plan and new law, preparation is required prior to delisting. The USFWS posted the down-listing rule in February 2003, and expect the delisting package to be developed this year. The Service anticipates litigation on down-listing to be settled by sometime in 2004, and delisting to occur in December 2004. Regardless of the timeline, some activities by the Department will be necessary.

Action Requested:

Accept a new Wolf Policy.

Staff Recommendations:

The new wolf policy should be clear enough to allow the Department staff to fulfill obligations in the Wolf Plan and prepare for delisting as well as management following delisting. It should also protect expenditures. The following is a policy suggestion.

The legislature has passed HB294 that allows the state to become re-involved in wolf management, and has also approved a Wolf Conservation and Management Plan that

identified IDFG as Idaho's primary managers of wolves following delisting. Biological wolf recovery has occurred in Idaho under the oversight of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and delisting is underway. We acknowledge the complex nature of wolf conservation and management and the controversial role that wolves will play in our state. We recognize that the state's interests would be best served by state control of wolf management. We also recognize our responsibilities to preserve, protect, and perpetuate all wildlife of the State of Idaho.

IDFG staff should do what is necessary and within the guidelines of state and federal laws and Idaho's Wolf Conservation and Management Plan to prepare for and to take over management once wolves are delisted. These efforts should be coordinated through the Wildlife Bureau and the Director's office. It is the intention of this commission that license dollars not be spent on wolf management, and any wolf related work that is not currently funded is contingent upon additional federal funding, or otherwise must have Director's approval. Staff will continue to coordinate and work with the Governor's Office of Species Conservation as outlined under HB294.

These are the logical next steps toward fulfilling IDFG's obligations under the legislative and governor's direction.

Action: Burns moves, Wood seconds, to adopt as recommended. Unanimous.

22. Access Yes Funding Options, Steve Barton.

Lottery tags, or legislation with a surcharge on nonresident drivers licenses surrendered by new residents to Idaho, which would raise about \$330,000. Access yes validations or surcharge. What would it take in license fee increases? About one dollar on residents and two on nonresidents. Montana added dollars to the nonresident tags, but we have done that plenty and are having trouble selling what we have. No specific proposal needed at this time, but if legislation is needed it should go to the Gov's office in August. Wood suggests that since anglers, bird hunters etc are going to gain access, it ought to be a fee added to every license. General direction is to see about a fee increase as proposed by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Committee, which suggested the Commission should be allowed to make incremental fee increases, up to a point, without legislative prior approval. Education on the economic value of wildlife to Idaho with an eye toward finding other funding sources would be the long-term goal.

23. Legislative Proposal Review, Steve Huffaker.

Background: The Department legislative team (Roger Fuhrman, Steve Barton, Jim Unsworth and Virgil Moore) and Director Huffaker reviewed legislative proposals submitted by Department staff and recommends the Department introduce four pieces of legislation for the 2004 legislative session. The Commission may want to consider another proposal regarding marking boundaries of shooting preserves.

The Division of Financial Management (DFM) and the Governor's Office must approve state agency legislative proposals. In August, DFM considers legislative "idea" forms. If DFM approves the concept, the agency will submit draft legislation in October.

Proposals for draft legislation:

- Provide funding source for Access Yes program – no specific funding method has been identified at this point.
- Allow Commission to set fees within a range approved by the legislature. This would implement a recommendation by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force.
- Adjust fees for controlled hunt applications and permits. Proposal is to set permit fee at \$5.50, application fee would be \$7.

- Shooting preserves – game farm bird marking requirements would be done by rule not statute.

Proposal to discuss:

- Shooting preserve boundary requirements would be set by rule not statute.
- Wood suggests the commission should be able to meet once a quarter, not in specific months in each quarter.

Public Involvement Process:

Bureau Chiefs, Regional Supervisors and other staff were asked to submit ideas for proposed legislation. The Department legislative team reviewed the proposals and made a recommendation to the Director. Anyone proposing legislation was asked to identify parties that would be affected by or interested in a specific proposal. If DFM accepts a proposal, efforts will be made to discuss it with those parties.

Justification:

- Access program – increase public access, improve landowner-sportsman relations.
- Fees – proposed legislation is consistent with Governor's Task Force recommendation.
- Controlled hunt fees – addresses customer service issue.
- Shooting preserves – addresses issues brought to Commission attention.

Action Requested: Approve "ideas" for submission to DFM. Review and approve proposed legislation at October Commission meeting.

24. Update on automated licensing system, Steve Barton.

G-TECH has proposed to renew contract to Dec. 31, 2006, with new terminals and printers at all vendor locations at no cost to IDFG, saving \$1 million budgeted. Full-sized keyboard. PC based, web type application. Existing equipment would belong to IDFG. Upgrades would be completed by April 2004. System hours would go to 24/7 rather than 0500 to 2400. Div. State Purchasing has approved this extension. Other improvement discussed.

25. Review proposal for 2004-05 fishing regulations, Chip Corsi.

Background:

Every two years, the Fisheries Bureau and Regions (Department) and Commission review current and proposed fishing rules. Both biological and social issues are considered in developing and maintaining or modify fishing rules.

Policy issues:

No policy issues, except that if a rule governing "for-profit" tournaments is adopted, guidelines or policy for implementation may be needed.

Public Involvement Process:

Each Regional Fishery Manager takes comments from the public regarding fishing rules during the previous two years. Additionally, during this spring each region has notified the public through news releases that they are holding open houses, public meetings, and/or are accepting comments in any form to discuss current and proposed fishing rules and to accept suggestions for rule changes from the public. Following Commission action on these general concepts, they will be presented to the public and agencies as proposals for specific rule modifications, and additional input will be sought. These comments will be reviewed by the Department, and used to develop specific rule proposals for consideration by the Commission at the October meeting.

Justification:

Title 36 of Idaho State Code give the Commission the authority to set rules to preserve, protect, or manage fish and wildlife in Idaho. Alternatives proposed (attached) are to address biological issues, angler desires, and/or to make the rule book more easily understood.

Action Requested:

Approval by Commission to take the proposed alternatives to the public and other interested parties for additional input. Final proposals presented to the Commission in October will reflect additional public input, input from other stakeholders, and possibly new biological information.

Staff Recommendations:

Approve for public review and comment.

For copies of fisheries proposals, contact Chip Corsi at 334-3791. Some corrections were made to the draft copies of proposals issued prior to the meeting.